



CONGRESSMAN

John J. Duncan, Jr.

Washington Report

Second District—Tennessee

August 2003

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

✓Patriotic District

I have long believed that East Tennessee is one of the most patriotic areas of this Nation. I have attended many meetings and events over the past two or three months, but four of the highlights have been the dedication of the tallest flag pole in the United States at the Veterans Memorial Park in Madisonville; the Fourth of July events in Farragut and Greenback; and the presentation of a Bronze Star to World War II veteran Athal Skeen in Knoxville. Almost 3,000 people stood in a drenching downpour of rain to show their appreciation for this Country and help dedicate the new pole and see the flag raised in Madisonville. Thousands more turned out for the patriotic events in Farragut and Greenback, where hundreds of children wore red, white and blue and marched or rode their decorated bicycles or carried American flags. Close to 150 friends and family members came to Lincoln Park Baptist Church to see Athal Skeen, a patriotic American, receive the Bronze Star for valiant service in France during World War II. Mr. Skeen did not even know he had been awarded this honor until a granddaughter discovered it recently while surfing the net. *Newsweek* magazine reported a few months ago that over half of the people of this world have to get by on \$2.00 or less a day. We are blessed almost beyond belief to be Americans and to live in the greatest Country on the face of this earth.

✓Trade Deficit

On April 3, I made the following speech on the Floor of the House: "Mr. Speaker, our trade deficit reached an astounding figure of over \$400 billion last year. This means we are still losing millions of jobs to other countries. Now in today's *Washington Post*, there are headlines saying 'White Collar Work a Booming U.S. Export' and 'More White Collar Work being Shipped Overseas.' According to this story, one study says by 2015, 3 million white collar jobs and \$140 billion in wages will have shifted from the U.S. to other nations. Another headline in today's *Post* says 'U.S. Manufacturers Cut Back in March.' The disciples of high tech told us not to worry about losing factory jobs, but now we are losing these 'new economy' jobs to China, India, and elsewhere. Is it any wonder that college graduates cannot find good jobs and are going to graduate school while working as waiters and waitresses? We need to start putting U.S. workers first and end trade agreements and government regulations that force more jobs to other countries. If we do not, Mr. Speaker, the standard of living for most Americans is going to go down, down, down."

✓Jobs

Unfortunately, unemployment has hit a nine year high. *Investors Business Daily* had a headline on July 1 saying: "U.S. propping up world as factory, service jobs move to China, elsewhere." Paul Craig Roberts, one

of our most respected nationally-syndicated columnists and former high-ranking Treasury official under President Reagan, wrote recently: "U.S. communities are losing manufacturing jobs. Americans who used to make things for a living now have part time jobs at Wal-Mart selling things made abroad. Taught not to worry by 'new economy' reassurances, Americans have maintained their consumption by taking the equity out of their homes with refinancing. In the past five years mortgage debt now stands at 100 percent of personal income. The U.S. has made the transition from the accumulation of wealth to the consumption of wealth. What is true for the individual in this case is also true for the country. Massive U.S. trade deficits are being financed by giving foreigners our assets."

✓Washington Visits

The first time I visited Washington was on the Safety Patrol trip when I was in the 6th grade at Chilhowee School in East Knoxville. The East Tennessee AAA has sponsored this trip since 1957 and has performed a great community service in doing so. Many thousands of school children have made their first, and sometimes only, visit to Washington on this trip. Before the terrible events of 9/11, the Safety Patrol trip had 2000 students and chaperones participate. This year, the group was down to 525. East Tennessee is a far better place to live and raise a family, but

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Washington is still a wonderful place to visit. In fact, with the extra security now in place, it is probably the safest big city anyone could visit. Some years ago, the AAA lowered the age and started bringing 5th graders. I hope every parent who can will encourage his or her 5th grader's school to participate in this exciting and educational trip. It is a wonderful opportunity for the children of East Tennessee.

✓ **National Searches**

For the past several years, most of the time a key government job has opened up in East Tennessee, the fashionable, sophisticated, politically correct thing to say has been that "we will conduct a national search" for the best possible person. I think possibly that some people who have grown up in East Tennessee have been teased so much that they have developed unjustified inferiority complexes. There are good, well-qualified people for every job living right in East Tennessee. We should not fall for the old myth that an expert is someone with a briefcase 500 miles from home. Our State now has over 6,000,000 people living in it, many of whom have come from other states. My own mother moved to Knoxville from Iowa after getting out of college 62 years ago. I promote Tennessee wherever I can and encourage people to move there. Most of the people who have moved in from other states are really good people. We should never place an unqualified person in any job, because we do a disservice to that person as well as the community when we do so. But some of our own government officials need to get over this perhaps subconscious bias they have against people with East Tennessee accents. We should not overlook good, well-qualified people right at home or in our state just because it sounds "progressive" to conduct a national search.



Congressman Duncan receives additional funds from U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta and Federal Highway Administrator Mary Peters to help relieve traffic congestion and improve safety in the Second District.

✓ **Education Money**

I pointed out in my last newsletter that a district like ours gets back far less in federal education funding than it sends to Washington. This is because ours, fortunately, is not an area of high poverty and we have very few who qualify for the special funding set aside for Native Americans, Alaskans, or Hawaiians, or for bilingual education. Also, some of the money is lopped off in Washington and some more in Nashville. We could have much more money for education if we just kept our money at home and did not federalize our schools. Also, I believe our local principals and teachers can run our schools more capably and efficiently than bureaucrats in Washington or Nashville can. Thus, I was the only member of the Tennessee Delegation who voted against the mis-named No Child Left Behind bill, which was written primarily by Sen. Kennedy. Almost every bill is given a motherhood and apple pie title, but if we passed every bill with an appealing title, we would bankrupt the Nation. Now, Gov. Bredesen has attacked this bill, saying the No Child Left Behind law puts all sorts of requirements on the states without providing the funding to carry out the man-

dates. This is almost always one of the problems when the federal government passes one-size-fits-all legislation.

✓ **Prescription Drugs**

Prescription drug prices in the U.S. are way too high, thanks primarily to our own federal government. Some testing for safety is good, but the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) became so big and bureaucratic that it was taking an average of 10 years and \$850 million to get a drug to market. This meant that no small companies had a chance, and, as in any heavily-regulated industry, the drug business ended up primarily in the hands of a few big giants. Nine of the last 14 FDA Commissioners have gone to work for big pharmaceutical companies at very high salaries. One of my committees has held three hearings on the issue of allowing American citizens to reimport lower-priced drugs from Canada or other countries. I favor this, but the big drug companies bitterly oppose it, claiming it is not safe. Yet the Federal Trade Commission has had not even one complaint from a consumer or even one instance of someone being hurt. It is simply not right for Americans to have to pay two to three times more for medicine than people in other

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developed nations. This would not have happened if we had not allowed this big government-big business duopoly to control this industry. We did not have this problem 40 or 50 years ago before the FDA became so big and bureaucratic and government got so far into medicine. We need a prescription drug benefit that helps lower-income senior citizens, and not one that becomes a windfall for giant pharmaceutical companies.

✓**Drug Benefit**

The House and Senate have now passed different versions of a prescription drug benefit for senior citizens. I have voted for this three times, but the first two were when we were operating with large federal surpluses. Now, the deficit for just this year is approximately \$455 billion. This time, we had the choice of voting for a bill that would cost about \$400 billion over the next ten years or one that even its supporters admitted would cost about one trillion. The syndicated columnist Robert Novak and several think tanks and publications have predicted that even the less-expensive bill will explode in costs in future years and probably cost closer to one trillion than the optimistic \$400 billion projection. Already, Medicare and Social Security costs, even without the drug benefit, are expected to more than double by 2030. We will destroy the economic future for our children and grandchildren if we do something we simply cannot afford. I want to help senior citizens with their drug bills, but I will not vote for the final bill unless it comes out of conference with some reasonable cost containment provisions.

✓**Medical Premiums**

One of the most common complaints I have heard over the last two or three years is about the tremendous increase in the cost of medical insurance. Premium increases of 25% or 30% in one year are not uncommon, and a

woman in Knoxville called and said the small company she worked for had been hit with a 105% jump in just two years even with an extremely high deductible. There is simply no way that either employers or employees can pay premiums that have been going up this fast in years of very low inflation. On June 19, the House passed the Small Business Health Fairness Act, a bill of which I was a cosponsor. This bill allows business, industry, or professional associations to establish association group health plans. This bill would give small businesses and their employees the opportunity to set up more affordable health benefit plans comparable to very large corporations. This bill is now before the Senate. We also passed another medical savings account bill, which is now in a House-Senate conference. In many areas, new technology is bringing prices down. This is not happening in the medical field. If these prices and premiums continue to go up at rapid rates, those who are making big money in these fields today are going to kill the goose that laid the golden egg. There will be such a strong demand, the Country will go to totally government-run medicine, and the quantity and quality of medical care will go down drastically.

✓**Terrorism**

Shortly after the terrible tragedies of 9/11, one senior member of the House Appropriations Committee estimated we would spend \$1.5 trillion dollars over the next five years on extra security measures. No one disputed this, although I hope it is too high. However, the Transportation Security Administration ran \$3.3 billion over budget in its first year of operation. And almost every department and agency of the federal government started spending much more on security after September, 2001. Many major bills added the word security to the title to get more fund-

ing. After the Agriculture Committees named the Farm bill the Farm Security Act, the *Wall Street Journal* editorialized that the Congress should start giving four times the scrutiny to any bill with the word "security" in it. One column I read said people are still many thousands of times more likely to be killed by disease or accident than by any act of terrorism, and we need to come to our senses. If we spend hundreds of billions unnecessarily on terrorism, this means there will be less to spend on things like cancer research or highway safety. The non-partisan *National Journal* magazine said this: "Because terrorism is psychological warfare, one of the best responses may be to gradually become less afraid of it --- that is, to prepare for it not just with duct tape but with psychology. If Al Qaeda and its ilk conclude that terror attacks against a McDonald's in Birmingham or the Sears Tower in Chicago would not bring the United States to its knees, perhaps such attacks would be less likely....(T)reating terrorism as terrifyingly different from other threats to Americans' lives, health, and financial well-being has, arguably, made future terror attacks more difficult to prevent and to recover from."

✓**Government Contracts**

Almost every major federal contract is a sweetheart deal of one sort or another, usually going to some company that has hired a high-ranking government official or military officer who has retired early or a highly-paid lobbyist. This should be illegal but has gone on since long before I came to Congress and will continue long after I leave. This practice is so pervasive, it would be impossible to pass a bill to prohibit it. The only possible solution is to elect people who will vote to drastically downsize the federal government and decrease its funding.

This speech was delivered on the Floor of the House on July 8. The next day, the Secretary of Defense told a Senate Committee that we are now spending \$4 billion a month in Iraq, twice as high as previously estimated.



Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

House of Representatives

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, it seems that every day we read about a young American soldier being killed in Iraq. Three were killed in a 24-hour period from Sunday to Monday. In its November 25 issue, "Fortune" magazine, long before the war started, said an American occupation would be "prolonged and expensive" and that it "could turn U.S. troops into sitting ducks for Islamic terrorists."

Unfortunately, this prediction has turned out to be deadly accurate. This past Saturday, the top of the front page of The Washington Post had a headline reading "Attacks By Iraqi's Growing Bolder." The next day a young American soldier was shot in the head at point blank range as he stood in line to buy a soft drink.

A few days ago, the leading Shiite cleric, the most respected figure of the largest population group in Iraq, demanded that the U.S. get out and leave Iraq to the Iraqis. It is so politically correct today and sounds so fashionable and intellectual to say that the U.S. will have to be in Iraq for several years and that it will not be easy and that we must be prepared for the sacrifice and the difficulties ahead.

Well, someone should ask why. Saddam Hussein was a very evil man, a tyrant, a dictator; but his total military budget was only about two-tenths of 1 percent of ours. He was no threat to us, as this 3-week battle, with almost no resistance, proved. Our military did a great job, as we all knew they would. Now we should bring them home.

President Eisenhower, as everyone knows, was a retired Army general, a graduate of West Point. He loved the military. Yet he warned us as strongly as he possibly could against what he called the military industrial complex. Pressured by this complex, we have now spent over \$100 billion on the operation in Iraq. The Congressional Budget Office originally estimated that a 3-month war followed by a 5-year occupation would cost us at least \$272 billion. Most estimate that we will stay in Iraq for 5 to 10 years, at a cost of 200 to \$300 billion, or more. And because we already face a \$400 billion deficit for this year, and hundreds of billions more in the years ahead, we will have to borrow the money to do all this. Once again, we should ask: Why?

Already we have had demonstrations by Iraqi soldiers demanding back pay, and similar demands from Iraqi retirees. Why should American taxpayers borrow hundreds of billions to pay the Iraqi military or Iraqi retirees and to rebuild Iraq? We are jeopardizing the futures of our children and grandchildren. I believe our Founding Fathers would be shocked if they knew what we were doing today.

I remember reading a few years ago in The Washington Post that we had our troops in Haiti picking up garbage and settling domestic disputes. Later I read that we had our troops in Bosnia building latrines and giving rabies shots to Bosnian dogs. I have nothing against the people in either Haiti or Bosnia, but they should pick up their own garbage and build their own toilets.

Now we are told that the military will build or rebuild 6,000 schools in Iraq and give free basic health care to any Iraqis who need it. We will stay in Iraq for many years, at great expense to U.S. citizens, because several large multinational companies will benefit from large contracts there. We will stay there because all the pressures and money and power and glory within the Department of Defense, the State Department, the National Security Council, and our intelligence agencies are to continue to do more and more in other countries.

These people are not seen as world statesmen and men and women of action unless we get involved in every dispute around the world. They never debate or discuss the merits of all this; they just label all opponents of an interventionist foreign policy as isolationist. However, whenever anyone uses this term, they are simply resorting to mindless name-calling.

Now I suppose we are going into the chaos in Liberia, as we have Haiti, Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Lord knows where next.

What we really need are more Calvin Coolidges, more people in government who believe in a humble foreign policy. None of these countries were any threat to us. Should we now change the name of the Defense Department to the Department of Foreign Aid or the Department of International Social Work?

I believe in and have always supported a strong national defense, but I do not believe in massive foreign aid. Most of our foreign adventures are creating great resentment toward the U.S. around the world.

The Iraqi people may have hated Saddam Hussein, but they do not want Americans or our puppets running their country either. They have humongous oil wealth. Let them rebuild their own country. The only Iraqis who want us to stay there are the ones we are paying or who believe they can get money from us in the future.

Our first obligation should be to America citizens, and the lives of American soldiers should be precious to us. Let us bring our troops home before more and more of them are murdered. We can be friends with the Iraqi people without making our soldiers sitting ducks for Islamic terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, let us leave Iraq to the Iraqis.

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✓ **Taxpayer Ripoffs**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) spent approximately \$484 million on research on the drug Taxol. It then gave the right to produce and market this drug to one of the major pharmaceutical companies. This Company has now earned nine billion dollars from Taxol sales since 1983. The NIH has received royalty payments of just \$35 million through 2002. The Transportation Security Administration budgeted \$120 million to hire airport screeners. TSA then gave the contract to a British company that charged the government over \$700 million. Hiring screeners was probably an administrative headache, but not rocket science. Thousands of American companies could have done a better, much less-expensive job. Federal officials seem to be able to rationalize or justify almost anything since the money is not coming out of their pockets.

✓ **Supreme Court**

Some recent decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court have continued a trend of the last 40 years or so for the Court to act like a super-legislature. Throughout most of our history, the Court seemed to follow more traditional concepts of federalism and give great deference to state laws and actions by state legislatures. The 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution says: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people." The Founding Fathers certainly did not envision a dictatorial Court that involved itself in almost every dispute, exercising very little judicial restraint. The Court recently issued very confusing, muddled decisions in regard to affirmative action. A University of Tennessee professor wrote in the *News-Sentinel* that the decisions "may also have created at least as many problems as they have solved." Almost everyone supports affirmative

action on the basis of need such as scholarships for lower-income students. Such a system would probably benefit African-Americans more than any other group. However, affirmative action based solely on race has created resentment and difficulty. It also goes very much against Dr. Martin Luther King's famous statement that his dream was that someday people "will be judged not by the color of our skin, but by the content of our character."

✓ **Missing Money**

It seems that the federal government is so big and bureaucratic it cannot do anything in an economical and efficient way. We read and hear about so many examples of federal waste and inefficiency that we too often take it for granted or shrug our shoulders about it. *The San Francisco Chronicle* reported recently that the Defense Department "couldn't account for more than a trillion dollars in financial transactions, not to mention dozens of tanks, missiles and planes." The newspaper said: "Though defense has long been notorious for waste, recent government reports suggest the Pentagon's money management woes have reached astronomical proportions. A study by the Defense Department's Inspector General found that the Pentagon couldn't properly account for more than a trillion dollars in monies spent. A GAO report found Defense inventory systems so lax that the U.S. Army lost track of 56 airplanes, 32 tanks, and 36 Javelin missile command launch units." This story was not based on reports from some anti-defense group but came from studies done by the Defense Department's own Inspector General and the General Accounting Office. This comes on the heels of the Congress increasing defense spending for six straight years, including the biggest increases ever in each of the last two years. Defense spending this year is \$114 billion

more than 1996, and this does not count over \$100 billion in supplemental appropriations for wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and \$9-10 billion each year for military construction projects (which are in a separate appropriations bill). Everyone wants to support the military, but surely we cannot and should not accept horrendous waste by any department.

✓ **Taxes**

Under the President's recently passed tax legislation, according to the Treasury Department, the federal income tax liability of 3,000,000 lower income families is totally eliminated. Six million single women with children get tax cuts averaging \$558. The plan provides an average tax cut of \$1,549 to over 42 million families with children. 12 million elderly taxpayers receive an average tax cut of \$1,401. Small businesses can write off up to \$100,000 of equipment purchases instead of the present \$25,000, helping create more jobs. Businesses also benefit from an increase in the first-year bonus depreciation deduction from 30% to 50% for qualified investments. Some said we should not cut taxes in a time of rising federal deficits. Actually, we should both cut taxes and reduce federal spending enough to wipe out the deficit. This combination, along with more pro-American trade agreements, would greatly strengthen our economy.

✓ **Privacy**

A few years ago, CBS Radio News reported that computer hackers had broken into the top secret files at the Pentagon thousands of times. This came to mind recently during a hearing of the Government Reform Committee when a panel of experts testified that privacy really is a thing of the past. A computer expert can find out anything he wants to about any individual. This is very unfortunate. One of the panel members testified that identity theft is now

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the fastest-growing crime in America. We are now completely dependent on and controlled by computers. *The Washington Times* reported a few weeks ago that computer chips the size of grains of sand have become the latest trend among manufacturers and that this “new technology can fix the exact location of virtually any consumer product and the humans who wear and carry the items.” This is going too far. The author Alston Chase wrote of one of his classmates at Harvard who became a great success as a computer expert but then became disillusioned and wrote: “Sure, computers allow us to run a business more efficiently than without them...the unfortunate part is that many things that are possible today may turn out to be more harmful than useful. This obviously includes the capability to create civilization-ending weapons and to probe into individuals’ lives on a scale that would make the Soviets proud.” Mr. Chase also wrote about Harvard researcher Kenneth Keniston who said that science and technology that moves too fast will cut people off from their past, shatter communities and families, and create gulfs between children and parents. Keniston said: “What our society lacks, then, is a vision of itself that transcends technology. It exacts a heavy human toll not because technology exists, but because we allow technology to reign.”

✓College Tuition

The *Newsweek-Washington Post* Columnist Robert Samuelson, pointed out in a column in 1997 that college tuition at public four-year colleges had risen 254% between 1980 and 1995 during years inflation totaled 85%. He was writing in opposition to a proposed tax deduction for college expenses, because he said this would just lead to higher tuition, as has the federal student loan program. Many colleges have been able to tamp down any

opposition to tuition increases by just telling students they would get them an easy loan. Now, unfortunately, many students are leaving college with huge student loan debts and very poor job prospects. Many are going to graduate school because they cannot find a good job with just a Bachelors Degree as they could years ago. Colleges have continued to raise their tuition at about three times the rate of inflation since 1995, whether the economy has been good or bad. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission recently announced tuition increases ranging from 9% to 14%. Parents and students should look closely at job prospects in a particular field before selecting a major. It is a very sad thing to get a degree, or advanced degrees in a field and then not be able to find a job.

✓District Projects

I do not vote for every spending bill that comes down the pike, because I believe we need to leave individuals and families with more money to take care of themselves and their children. However, when I know an appropriation bill is going to pass, I try to get as much as possible for our District. Some recent examples of items we have been able to get passed include:

- \$2 million for the Lower Second Creek Greenway Project in Knoxville to connect the newly-completed Convention Center to UT and the Riverfront Venues.
- \$1.2 million for the National Transportation Research Center in Knoxville to conduct research on safety issues related to heavy trucks.
- \$1.5 million for the Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority for a new taxiway and new service roads.
- \$1 million for the UT Medical Center’s prenatal and neonatal Center.
- \$400,000 for the rehabilitation of historic structures in the Great

Smoky Mountains National Park.

- \$1.4 million to widen the Martel Road underpass in Loudon County.
- \$1.35 million to help with the renovation of the Oostanuala Wastewater Treatment Plant in Athens.
- \$405,000 for renovations to the historic Tennessee Theatre.

Most of the projects I try to include in bills are things that local officials consider to be high priorities or are for federal programs in our area that seem to be doing good things for our Nation.

✓Intelligence Agencies

No other country in the world spends more than a fraction of what we spend on our intelligence agencies each year. Yet our intelligence has been severely criticized by almost everyone outside of Congress and the agencies themselves over both the 9/11 tragedies and the situation in Iraq. Intelligence expert and author James Bamford said the National Security Agency (NSA) “found out about the attacks [of 9/11] watching CNN!!” The NSA is the same agency for which we built a plush \$320 million state-of-the-art building a few years ago at a cost of \$320 a square foot. Whenever a federal agency messes up, they immediately say it is because they were underfunded. Yet, if anyone checks, they have always gotten huge increases over the previous five or ten years. When the Immigration and Nationalization Service (INS) was criticized about the 9/11 hijackers, almost all of whom were here illegally, they claimed they were underfunded. Yet Congressman Elton Gallegly (R-CA) pointed out on *60 Minutes* that the INS had received an astounding 250% increase over the previous eight years. As to the intelligence concerning Iraq, columnist Josh Marshall wrote:

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“Did we have bad intelligence? Did political appointees dismiss good, but less threatening intelligence? Or was damning intelligence actually cooked up for political purposes? Those are all legitimate questions. But when Congress starts trying to get at the answers we should be open to the more complex, but in its own way no less disturbing possibility, that at least some of the main proponents of this war were so consumed by their zeal to crush Saddam and so driven by ideology that they fooled themselves as much as anyone else.” I do not believe that the President intentionally misled anyone, but I believe there are some high-ranking Administration officials who exaggerated the threat because they have had a goal of going to war against Iraq for many years.

✓ **Responsive Government**

We would have a much more responsive government if we elected more people instead of fewer. Yet, another popular slogan of elitists is “take the politics out.” But politics simply means the people have some voice in or more direct control over their own government. And when the people were denied the right to vote in the elections of school superintendents, it did not take the politics out, it just gave control to very small groups in each county instead of the people as a whole. Bad people should be voted out of elective office but when more and more government jobs are removed from political control, the Country becomes less free. We have many good people working within the bureaucracy. But, we also have too many who know they are so protected by the civil service system that they treat people in an arrogant way and forget that ours is supposed to be a government of, by, and for the people.

✓ **Irish Parliament**

I recently was honored to host 10 members of the Parliament of Ireland, including the Speaker of

the House, and the Parliament’s two top administrators on a two-day visit to East Tennessee. This was the only place they came besides Washington. I was in Ireland briefly last year and was a guest at an event hosted by the Speaker and other members. I invited them to come to Tennessee and was pleasantly surprised when they accepted this invitation. Most of the time groups such as this go just to one or two of our biggest cities, and this was the largest delegation of another nation’s parliament which had ever visited East Tennessee. The group heard presentations by the National Safe Skies Alliance, TVA, the East Tennessee Historical Society, the National Park Service, two U.T. professors and Athletic Director Doug Dickey. The Knoxville Chamber of Commerce gave a presentation to our visitors, and they enjoyed a houseboat ride on the Tennessee River and tours of the Smokies and the Gatlinburg Aquarium. They were shown wonderful East Tennessee hospitality and were tremendously impressed and very grateful. This area has many ancestral ties to both Scotland and Ireland, and much of our heritage comes from those two countries. When U.S. citizens can establish close friendships with or show personal kindness to people from other countries, it does far more good than just giving money through foreign aid programs.

✓ **Natural Gas**

On June 17, *The New York Times* had a front page headline reading “Big Shortage of Natural Gas Is Raising Economic Worries.” Three and one-half weeks later, the Associated Press reported that Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, testifying at a Senate hearing, said “high natural gas prices and shortages are hurting some industries,” and he “predicted jobs would be lost and business would shift to foreign competitors if prices don’t recede.” *The Washington Times*,

in an editorial, said natural gas prices had gone up 700 percent since 2000 and that “approximately 40 percent of U.S. natural gas resources are inaccessible thanks to stringent environmental regulations on the federal lands under which they exist.” The way most people will see this problem is in much higher utility bills, and KUB has announced that it will have to increase rates between 17 and 30 percent. The previous Administration, under pressure from some special interest groups, put trillions of cubic feet of natural gas off limits for drilling. The Sierra Club opposed the confirmation of Gale Norton as President Bush’s Secretary of the Interior because she had “long advocated” opening up more land to natural gas production. John Merline, a *USA Today* editorial writer, summed up the situation this way: “The problem is that the same government pushing natural gas demand is also keeping vast stocks of it essentially bottled up underground through tight and sometimes absolute restrictions on what can be done on the land and sea above....The reason for all of this is simple: environmentalists and preservationists have long pressured government to restrict or ban drillers from sensitive areas.” The American Petroleum Council says 213 trillion cubic feet have been locked up even though it can be obtained without harm and with little “footprint” above ground. Wealthy environmentalists who encouraged the use of natural gas as the cleanest burning fuel are now driving up the price by greatly limiting its supply.

✓ **Private Sector**

The good life we have in this Country does not come from the government; it comes from our great free enterprise system. Government has no money to spend that it does not first take from businesses. There is waste in the private sector just as there is in the public sector. However,

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the waste by business pales in comparison to the waste in government. Thus, every dollar that can be kept in the private sector does more to create jobs or bring down prices - more bang for the buck, so to speak. Government does do some good things, but in every country where the government takes too much, either legally or illegally, the people suffer economically. Government has no money to spend that is not first produced by businesses and then taken in taxes from businesses and individuals.

English Fluency

I have always tried to help the University of Tennessee in every way I can. However, I continue to hear complaints, as I have many times in the past, about UT professors who are not fluent in English and thus are very hard for American students to understand. I did discuss this at one point with UT officials. In response, I was later told that a program called "Speak" had been instituted so that if a professor has difficulty with English, an American graduate student would be placed in the classroom to assist the professor. I do not know if there really is such a program, but this is what I was told. However, I am still hearing these complaints. Most universities and colleges in this Nation receive large amounts of federal money through grants, appropriations, and student loan funds. I do not believe any college or university in this Nation

should hire a professor who is not fluent in English. Apparently, the most prestigious things in academic circles today are research and writing, and some professors feel teaching is of secondary or lesser importance. Thus, it has become difficult for many students to get the courses they need to graduate in four years as was common years ago. There is no shortage of very well-qualified people willing to teach at the college level and who are fluent in English. The primary purpose of a university should be to teach, and that teaching should be done in a way that students can understand.

Taxpayer Rating

Many groups rank the voting records of Members of Congress, but most count only 10 or 15 key votes. They can turn almost anyone into a liberal or a conservative depending on the group's agenda and the votes they choose. However, the National Taxpayers Union ranks every bill with any significant spending. Thus, I was pleased to be ranked the fifth most fiscally conservative member of the 435 in the House in the latest rankings by this organization. This newsletter would not be long enough to list all the examples there are of ridiculous and wasteful federal spending. However, a few days ago, I voted for an amendment to eliminate the funding (\$1.5 million) for four ridiculous studies at the National Institutes of Health; including studies on 1) San Francisco's

Upcoming Constituent Days

(First Come, First Served)

Thursday, August 14

10:00 a.m.—McMinn County
Niota Elementary School
418 Burn Road, Niota

4:00 p.m.—Monroe County

Sweetwater High School
414 South High Street,
Sweetwater

Friday, August 15

10:00 a.m.—Sevier County
Northview Elementary School
3293 Douglas Dam Road,
Kodak

5:00 p.m.—Knox County

Sarah Moore Green School
3001 Brooks Road, Knoxville

Saturday, August 16

9:00 a.m.—Knox County
Central High School
5321 Jacksboro Pike, Knoxville

Monday, August 18

10:00 a.m.—Loudon County
Greenback Community Center
6889 Morganton Road,
Greenback

4:00 p.m.—Blount County

Townsend Elementary School
140 Tiger Drive, Townsend

Asian Prostitutes, 2) Mood Arousal and Sexual Risk Taking, 3) Sexual Habits of Older Men, and 4) American Indian Transgender Research. Unfortunately, the amendment to eliminate these studies failed by a vote of 212 to 210.

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
Official Business

John R. Duncan

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